

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Final Action dated May 13, 2004. The amendments included herein merely address dependent claims that were found to be allowable but for their dependence on a rejected base claim by adding the limitations of such dependent claims, and of any intervening claims, to their respective base claims. Accordingly, the amendments should be entered in due course.

Claims 1-26 were pending in the application. In the Final Action, claims 1-8, 10-21 and 23-26 were rejected, and claims 9 and 22 were objected to. In this Amendment, claims 8, 9, 21 and 22 have been canceled, and claims 1 and 14 have been amended. Claims 1-7, 10-20 and 23-26 thus remain for consideration.

Applicants submit that claims 1-7, 10-20 and 23-26 are in condition for allowance and request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in light of the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter / Claim Objections / §103 Rejections

Claims 1-8, 10-21 and 23-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Connor et al. (US Patent No. 6,011,851) in view of Allen et al. (US Patent No. 6,160,573).

Claims 9 and 22 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner indicated that claims 9 and 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 8 and 21 have been canceled, thereby rendering their rejections moot.

The independent claims (claims 1 and 14) have been amended to include the limitations of claims 9 and 22, respectively. Further, amended claims 1 and 14 include the

respective intervening claims (claims 8 and 21). Accordingly, claims 1 and 14 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-7 and 10-13 depend on claim 1. Since claim 1 is patentable, claims 2-7 and 10-13 are patentable for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is patentable.

Claims 15-20 and 23-26 depend on claim 14. Since claim 14 is patentable, claims 15-20 and 23-26 are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons that claim 14 is patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, are patentably distinct over the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. Changes to these claims, as presented herein, are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §§101, 102, 103 or 112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.


If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions, he/she is invited to call the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

Respectfully submitted,

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